

IN THE CLAIMS

1. **(Currently Amended)** An online system of locating a consumer product having specific configuration in an enterprise production pipeline and inventory, comprising:
- a locate client process operable to:
 - receive product configuration data; and
 - generate a search request message incorporating the product configuration data in response to user input;
 - an inventory database **storing that stores** product availability data **comprising information about for** products **that are** on the order bank, **products** being produced, **products** in-transit to distribution facilities, and products at the distribution facilities; and
 - a locate server process operable to:
 - receive the search request message from the locate client process **and further operable to;**
 - search the product availability data in the inventory database for products matching and substantially matching the product configuration data, ~~the locate server operable to;~~
 - generate a search reply message containing the matching products; and
 - return the search reply message to the locate client process.
2. **(Original)** The system, as set forth in claim 1, wherein the search request message and search reply message are XML messages.
3. **(Original)** The system, as set forth in claim 1, wherein the search reply message comprises:
- a list of products and respective configuration data; and
 - a percentage value for each product in the list indicative of the degree of matching between the product and the product configuration data contained in the search request message.

4. **(Canceled)**

5. **(Original)** The system, as set forth in claim 1, wherein the search request message comprises a list of search criteria and a weighting of each criterion.

6. **(Original)** The system, as set forth in claim 1, wherein the search reply message comprises a pointer to an image of each product.

7. **(Original)** The system, as set forth in claim 1, wherein the locate server process comprises:

a listener operable to receive the search request message from the locate client process;

a parser operable to receive the search request message from the listener and extract message parameters; and

a searcher operable to search the product availability data in the inventory database according to the message parameters.

8. **(Original)** The system, as set forth in claim 1, wherein the locate client process comprises:

a message converter operable to receive a search request document containing search criteria and convert to an XML document having a predetermined format; and

a message client process operable to receive the XML document and convert to an XML search request message.

9. **(Original)** The system, as set forth in claim 8, further comprising a response parser operable to receive the search reply messages from the locate server process and generate record set objects therefrom.

10. **(Currently Amended)** An online method of locating a consumer product having specific configuration in an enterprise production pipeline and inventory, comprising:
receiving a search request message having product configuration data submitted by a user;

formulating a search query with search criteria corresponding to the product configuration data;

searching ~~an inventory database for a product matching the product configuration data, the inventory database containing information about product availability data associated with~~ products that are on the order bank, ~~products~~ in-production, ~~products~~ in-transit, and ~~products~~ in-inventory for a product matching the product configuration data;

generating a search reply message containing any product determined based on the search of the product availability data to substantially ~~matching~~ match the product configuration data; and

sending the search reply message to the user.

11. **(Currently Amended)** The method, as set forth in claim 10, further comprising:

receiving the search request message on a predetermined port;

parsing the search request message to extract product configuration data; and

searching the ~~inventory database~~ product availability data using the extracted product configuration data.

12. **(Original)** The method, as set forth in claim 10, wherein receiving the search request message comprises receiving an XML search request message.

13. **(Original)** The method, as set forth in claim 10, wherein generating the search reply message comprises:

compiling a list of products and respective configuration data; and

providing a percentage value for each product in the list indicative of the degree of match between the product and the product configuration data contained in the search request message.

14. **(Original)** The method, as set forth in claim 10, wherein receiving the search request message comprises receiving a list of search criteria and a weighting of each criterion.

15. **(Original)** The method, as set forth in claim 10, further comprising:
receiving a search request document containing search criteria and converting to an XML document having a predetermined format; and
converting the XML document to an XML search request message.

16. **(Original)** The method, as set forth in claim 10, further comprising:
displaying product configuration information to the user on a web page;
receiving product configuration selection from the user; and
displaying a search result list of product substantially matching the product configuration and percentage matching data on a web page.

17. **(Original)** The method, as set forth in claim 10, further comprising:
importing in-inventory product availability data from dealerships; and
importing in-process product availability data from an enterprise database.

18. **(Original)** The method, as set forth in claim 10, wherein generating the search reply message comprises:
incorporating a unique identifier of each substantially matching product;
incorporating product configuration data of each substantially matching product; and
sorting the substantially matching products by descending degree of match between the product configuration data of the products and the product configuration data in the search request message.

19. **(Original)** The method, as set forth in claim 10, further comprising:
receiving a tag request message submitted by the user, the tag request message containing a unique product identifier;
modifying the product availability data associated with the product identified by the unique product identifier in the inventory database; and
generating a tag reply message confirming the completion of tagging the identified product.

20. **(Original)** The method, as set forth in claim 19, further comprising suppressing the tagged product from subsequent search requests.

21. **(Original)** The method, as set forth in claim 16, further comprising displaying an image of the product in response to receiving a user selection input.

22. **(Original)** The method, as set forth in claim 16, further comprising displaying detailed information associated with a product in response to receiving a user selection input.

23. **(Currently Amended)** The method, as set forth in claim 16, further comprising:

receiving a user selection input of a product in the list;
generating a search request message having an unique product identifier associated with the selected product;

searching the ~~inventory database~~ product availability data for detailed data associated with the unique product identifier;

generating a search reply message having the detailed data.

24. **(Currently Amended)** An online method of locating automotive vehicles having specific configuration in an enterprise production pipeline and inventory for purchase, comprising:

receiving a search request message having vehicle configuration data submitted by a user;

formulating a search query with search criteria corresponding to the vehicle configuration data;

searching ~~an inventory database for a vehicle matching the vehicle configuration data, the inventory database containing information about~~ vehicle availability data associated with vehicles that are on the order bank, ~~vehicles~~ in-production, ~~vehicles~~ in-transit, and ~~vehicles~~ in-inventory at the dealerships for a vehicle matching the vehicle configuration data;

generating a search reply message containing any vehicle determined based on the search of the product availability data to substantially matching match the vehicle configuration data, the search reply message including a vehicle identifier and vehicle configuration data of each substantially matching vehicle; and

sending the search reply message to the user.

25. **(Currently Amended)** The method, as set forth in claim 24, further comprising:

receiving the search request message on a predetermined port;

parsing the search request message to extract vehicle configuration data; and

searching the ~~inventory database~~ vehicle availability data using the extracted vehicle configuration data.

26. **(Original)** The method, as set forth in claim 24, wherein receiving the search request message comprises receiving an XML search request message.

27. **(Original)** The method, as set forth in claim 24, wherein generating the search reply message comprises:

compiling a list of vehicles and respective vehicle configuration data; and
providing a percentage value for each vehicle in the list indicative of the degree of match between the vehicle and the vehicle configuration data contained in the search request message.

28. **(Original)** The method, as set forth in claim 24, wherein receiving the search request message comprises receiving a list of search criteria and a weighting of each criterion.

29. **(Original)** The method, as set forth in claim 24, further comprising:
receiving a search request document containing search criteria and converting to an XML document having a predetermined format; and
converting the XML document to an XML search request message.

30. **(Original)** The method, as set forth in claim 24, further comprising:
displaying vehicle configuration information to the user on a web page;
receiving vehicle configuration selection from the user; and
displaying a search result list of vehicles substantially matching the vehicle configuration and percentage matching data on a web page.

31. **(Currently Amended)** The method, as set forth in claim 24, further comprising:

importing in-inventory vehicle availability data from dealerships;
importing in-process vehicle availability data from an enterprise database; and
updating the ~~inventory database~~ vehicle availability data with the imported data.

32. **(Original)** The method, as set forth in claim 24, wherein generating the search reply message comprises:

incorporating a unique vehicle identifier of each substantially matching vehicle;
incorporating vehicle configuration data of each substantially matching vehicle; and
sorting the substantially matching vehicles by descending degree of match between the vehicle and the vehicle configuration data in the search request message.

33. **(Currently Amended)** The method, as set forth in claim 24, further comprising:

receiving a tag request message submitted by the user, the tag request message containing a unique vehicle identifier;

modifying the vehicle availability data associated with the vehicle identified by the unique vehicle identifier ~~in the inventory database~~; and

generating a tag reply message confirming the completion of tagging the identified vehicle.

34. **(Original)** The method, as set forth in claim 33, further comprising suppressing the tagged vehicle from subsequent search requests.

35. **(Original)** The method, as set forth in claim 30, further comprising displaying a photographic image of the vehicle in response to receiving a user selection input.

36. **(Original)** The method, as set forth in claim 30, further comprising displaying detailed information associated with a vehicle in response to receiving a user selection input.

37. **(Currently Amended)** The method, as set forth in claim 30, further comprising:

receiving a user selection input of a vehicle in the list;
generating a search request message having an unique vehicle identifier associated with the selected vehicle;

searching the ~~inventory database~~ vehicle availability data for detailed data
associated with the unique vehicle identifier;
generating a search reply message having the detailed data.

38. **(Currently Amended)** An online method of purchasing a vehicle, comprising:

displaying vehicle configuration data;

receiving user online input on vehicle configuration, including make, model, and color of the vehicle;

receiving user online input to search for a vehicle having the vehicle configuration;

generating a search request message incorporating the user-entered vehicle configuration;

sending the search request message to a locate process, the locate process operable to search ~~an inventory database for a vehicle matching the vehicle configuration data, the inventory database containing information about~~ vehicle availability data for vehicles that are on the order bank, ~~vehicles~~ in-production, ~~vehicles~~ in-transit, and ~~vehicles~~ in-inventory at the dealerships for a vehicle matching the vehicle configuration data;

receiving a search reply message including a list of vehicles determined based on the search of the vehicle availability data to substantially ~~matching~~ match the user-entered vehicle configuration; and

displaying the list of vehicles.

39. **(Original)** The method, as set forth in claim 38, further comprising:
receiving an online user input selecting a vehicle from the list of vehicles;
receiving an online user input requesting to tag the selected vehicle;
generating a tag request message incorporating a unique vehicle identifier of the selected vehicle; and
sending the tag request message to the locate process.

40. **(Original)** The method, as set forth in claim 38, wherein displaying the list comprises displaying the vehicles in descending percentage of degree of match to the user-entered vehicle configuration.

41. **(Original)** The method, as set forth in claim 38, further comprising:
receiving an online user input selecting a vehicle from the list of vehicles;
receiving an online user input requesting detailed data on the selected vehicle;
generating a search request message incorporating a unique vehicle identifier of the
selected vehicle; and
sending the search request message to the locate process.

42. **(Original)** The method, as set forth in claim 41, further comprising:
receiving a search reply message including detailed data on the selected vehicle; and
displaying the detailed data.

43. **(Original)** The method, as set forth in claim 41, further comprising:
receiving a search reply message including a pointer to an image of the selected
vehicle; and
displaying the detailed data using the pointer.

44. **(Original)** The method, as set forth in claim 41, further comprising:
receiving a search reply message including a uniform resource locator to a web page
containing an image of the selected vehicle; and
displaying the web page specified by the uniform resource locator.